

Delaware requests emergency declaration from USDA for crop damage due to recent storms

DOVER, Del. – Too much rain at the wrong time, like Delaware experienced in April and May, has destroyed several high dollar crops and threatens the yield of many others, leaving farmers to wonder what the future holds. In surveying the state and listening to farmers, Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse made a request for an emergency disaster declaration two weeks ago to USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Service Center.

"Delaware family farms are the backbone of our economy, making agriculture our number one industry," said **Governor Carney**. "Farming is hard no matter what – but when you get hit with the weather we have seen this spring, and the damage it has done to our fruit and vegetable crops, our grains, and our hay – it has a huge impact on our farmers, our communities, and the state as a whole."

Once a request for a declaration is made, the FSA staff begins official surveys of the status of current crops at the state and county level. These reports are then compiled, reviewed, and sent on to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. In order to be eligible for this declaration, Delaware has to have at least 30 percent loss in crop production for at least one crop.

"It is impossible for Delaware farmers to come out of this without emergency assistance," said **Scuse**. "Many of our fruit and vegetable farms have taken a beating and other crops definitely will not be able to reach optimal yields. We have

farmers who are trying to plant field corn for the third and fourth time. That's a lot of money invested in seed and when the bill arrives they are going to need help paying it."

The state has three months from the last day of the disaster to file a declaration request to USDA.

The benefit of an emergency disaster declaration is it gives farmers time to apply and get an emergency loan. These loans help producers to recover from production and physical losses from the torrential rains and flooding in Delaware. Farmers have nine months to apply for the loans once USDA makes the official crop damage declaration, which provides them time to compile the paperwork and only apply for the funds they really need to borrow.

Once submitted, Delaware has to wait to learn if USDA will grant them the emergency declaration.

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